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PRIMITIVE MAN

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THE RELIGION OF THE OJIBWA OF NORTHERN MINNESOTA

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THE material of this paper has been gathered since 1929 by the writer during summer field trips, spent among the Ojibwa of the reservations of northern Minnesota.¹ Information was sought concerning both the general culture and the religious and magical practices known to be widely distributed east and north of the Minnesota area. The writer has been fortunate in obtaining the services of several very reliable and intelligent interpreters who were born and bred in wigwams on the reservations. As a result of contact with the white population, there are only a few groups of Ojibwa residing in this area at the present time, who are still living in a comparatively primitive state. Of these, the Indians of Ponsford and of the northern shore of Red Lake seem to cling more than any others, to the old ways of their ancestors. There are also a few old members of the tribe living in Cass Lake, Leech Lake, Mille Lacs, Nett Lake, White Earth, Red Lake, Cloquet and Fond du Lac who have first-hand knowledge of the religious beliefs of their people.

¹ Notes on the writer's first visit to Cass Lake, Minn., were published in PRIMITIVE MAN, 1929, 2: 52-55.

They know the rites which they believe the Great Spirit has granted to the Ojibwa. It is from the above groups and individuals that the writer received the following information. All data in the text of the present paper are from the writer's field notes; some relevant data from published sources are added in footnotes. So far as possible, the exact wording of informants has been adhered to.

The Ojibwas' knowledge of the earth and the sciences was so limited, that anything they could not understand, or any object such as an odd-shaped rock, or even a waterfall, they were apt to regard as some sort of spirit, either good or bad. The earth, sun, moon, plants and animals and many other things animate and inanimate, were endowed with spirit nature. The Ojibwa called them their manidos,² and seemed to be in such perpetual fear of incurring their displeasure that they made offerings of tobacco, wild rice or other foods, to appease the anger of these spirits or to keep them propitious.

Although, comparatively speaking, the Ojibwa of northern Minnesota did not have such great fear of the elements as did some of our more southern Indians, still they were primarily a people of fear. Even today many of them will not camp near certain places which they hold in a kind of sacred or mysterious awe, as the result of some legend they have heard or of the dread of some manido. Rough water was thought to be caused by a wicket spirit. When a big wave came the Indians "fed" it something and paddled out of its clutches.³

The Ojibwa believed in a Supreme Being who was the Master of all life. He was the greatest of all the manidos and presided over them. He was called *Kijie manido*.⁴

To the Ojibwa, *Kijie manido* symbolized all that was good and kind,—love, warmth, heat, and light. For this reason, in their pictographs, the Indians represented him as the sun. Chief

² Often written *manilou*, *manitu*, *munido*

³ Most of their songs, which played such an important part in their tribal life, expressed their reliance upon supernatural aid (F. Densmore. Chippewa music, II, BAE-B 53, 15).

⁴ Also called *Kitci manitu* or *Gitci manitu*

Northwind explained it thus: "Nothing could equal the veneration with which they regarded this spirit. So great was their respect for him that they seldom mentioned his name except in some religious rite or sacrificial feast. They never used his name in vain nor were there any words in the Ojibwa tongue to express an oath. They did not even converse with the Great Spirit directly; only through a worthy intermediary could this be done."

When questioned as to their knowledge of *Kijie manido*, however, the Ojibwa seem very vague. They know he was never seen; but since he was all-powerful, he could take any form he wished to assume. The Ojibwa religious beliefs centered around this deity. Sacrifices of many kinds and forms were offered to him, not primarily to seek favors, but to give homage and adoration to him. Seeking help and power was only a secondary purpose in their offerings. Their conception of him was that of a personal supernatural being to whom they owed everything,—all that they knew, all that they possessed, all that they were.

They believed that every happening of their lives came from the hand of the Great Spirit. Even today, they accept, with submission to *Kijie manido*, whatever comes their way. At the time of death or of any great tragedy, they bow their heads and say *Kidinadagosimin*, "Thou [Great Spirit] willest it so to us." It was partly this spirit of submission and patient acceptance of all things that made it possible for the Indians to give up their lands so readily. More than this, the Ojibwa were always grateful for all that the Great Spirit did for them. They never partook of the fruits of the earth, or of the first game of the season, until they had offered a feast of thanksgiving to *Kijie manido* for his kindness to them. He it was who gave them all things. They would consider it a sacrilege to eat of these foods without having first provided a feast. Even when the young boy brought down his first game, a feast was first offered to the Great Spirit.

In addition to their individual sacrifices, the Ojibwa observed four thanksgiving feasts during the year. The spring thanksgiving was called *Giwambosomung*, the meaning of which was

given me as "sun shines after the long dark night." It was celebrated after the making of the first maple sugar. A feast was also held at the beginning of the blueberry season; another during the gathering of the first wild rice; and the fourth, at the killing of the first game in the fall. At these feasts some of the "first-fruit" was offered to the Great Spirit, while the giver talked to the manido and asked his blessings on the Indians. Then those present partook of the first fruit before eating of the general feast, which had been provided for the occasion. A dance was usually held as a part of the celebration "to show *Kijie manido* that the Indians were happy to serve him." In these feasts tobacco was always considered a precious offering, for, as one informant explained: "As the incense ascended heavenward, so rose the Ojibwa's prayers to the Great Spirit. 'Have pity upon us' were the words, literally translated, which they expressed."⁵

Fasting was also frequently observed to draw down blessings from *Kijie manido*. If, as a result of this, the Great Spirit favored a person with a dream of this manido, long life was assured. The greatest favors which could be obtained from any manido were health and long life.

In individual sacrifices, anything could be offered as a gift to the Great Spirit, for as one informant explained: "It all depended on the spirit level or plane the Indian had attained." Dogs were sometimes thrown into the lake, alive, as offerings. Since they were man's faithful companions and helpers in the hunt, no sacrifices were deemed more worthy. Dogs were not considered sacred by the Ojibwa. Dogs were very lowly animals, so the meat of dogs was eaten in feasts to show the humility of the Indians.

The Ojibwa are very indefinite in regard to the abode of *Kijie manido*. Most of the writer's informants thought he lived above. Several replied that he lived "up where the sun is close to the zenith." When they pointed upward to show this location, they always used the thumb, instead of the index finger, for they said, the latter portrayed scorn.

⁵ Words of Chief Northwind of Fond du Lac

Closely associated with the Great Spirit, in the mind of the Ojibwa, were the thunder manidos. These deities were four in number, and were called *animikig*. The Ojibwas never saw these manidos. Like *Kijie manido*, they were invisible. Their presence, however, was frequently manifested to man in the thunder and lightning. They represented the Great Spirit in the skies. Whenever they flapped their wings, they caused the thunder and the great winds. The glance from their eyes caused the lightning flashes. It was said they lived on the spirits of the deep or darkness. When they dived down into the water and brought up the wicked spirits in their claws, in order to carry them away to their home in the skies, the whole place was enveloped in fog. The Ojibwa were grateful to the Great Spirit for creating the thunderbirds to rid the earth and water of evil spirits. Otherwise the bad manidos would have dragged the Indians' canoes into the whirlpools.

The thunderbirds were the beings of the four cardinal points which controlled the winds. The Ojibwa looked upon them as messengers of the Great Spirit and had great reverence for them. They believed the thunderbirds favored their tribe in a very special way; consequently, the manidos kept their wings quiet and closed their eyes when they flew over their villages, to avoid raising bad storms near their homes. None of the writer's informants had ever heard of the parents of the thunderbirds,—most likely they were not known.

Kewadin was the Northwind being. As the first born, he was the leader of the thunderbirds. It was said he was thought to be young when the earth began; he is now old, yet he will last as long as the earth continues. Many of the Indians said he was angry if they wasted big game which they had killed. In the winter, he brought the rabbits and white partridges for their food, if the Indians were kind to him. He controlled the weather. The Indians called him "Father Wind" or "Babakeewis" or "Old Man Northwind". *Mingabion* ("melts frozen things") was the south wind. *Wabunodin* was the east wind. It was he who taught the Ojibwa the use of Grand Medicine. The youngest of the winds was *Nadikiawasin*, the west wind or aurora borealis. He possessed more power than any of his

brothers, though he was a clown and did very foolish things. He was imprisoned by the evil spirit, but at the end of the earth, it was believed, he would overcome the wicked one and be released.

During the first thunder storm in the spring, the Ojibwa still offer tobacco to *Nadikiawasin* and the four cardinal points. The women reverently place it on a rock in the corner of the yard, while the men smoke it in their pipes and blow the smoke to the four corners of the earth.

One informant told of an incident which occurred recently while she was living with her family near Cass Lake. They lived with the family of a medicine man in an improvised tent. One evening, at the approach of a severe storm, the old man placed tobacco in his pipe and lifted it toward the four cardinal points. Then he walked around the outside of the tent, carrying a lighted piece of birch bark in which tobacco had been wrapped.

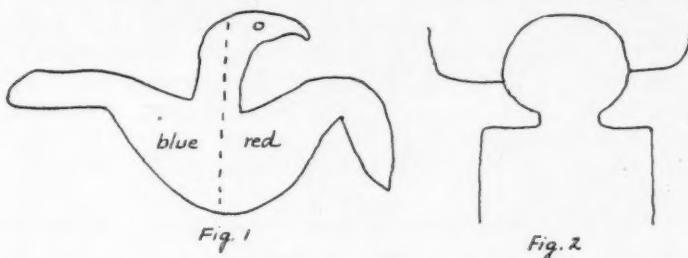
As far as the present writer could ascertain, anyone could put the tobacco on the water or fire, according to the location of the storm, although if it was done by those who had dreamed about this manido, it would be more effective. One informant said that tobacco was used in all sacrifices except in those to the evil spirit. One of the missionaries told the writer that when the first airplane was seen above Red Lake, the Ojibwa of that region thought it was a thunderbird and ran down to the shore to throw offerings on the water. Figures 1 and 2 (p. 39) are pictures of thunderbirds drawn by Chief Northwind. They are used to decorate the Midé drum and are painted half red and half blue, the tribal colors.⁶

The Ojibwa also believed there was a spirit in the whirlwind or tornado which would bring great misfortune to anyone who saw it. It was called *Asibisidosi*. It was described as a brown insect about three inches in length, larger in the center and tapering toward the ends like a cigar. The whirling of this insect was thought to cause the violent wind. The Indians were afraid

⁶ Fig. 1 is quite modern in its conception as compared with Fig. 2, another drawing of the thunder manido and one frequently seen on the Midé drum. This latter type is shown in F. Densmore, Chippewa music, BAE-B 45, pl. 1.

of the whirlwind spirit and would do anything to avoid its path.

Manidos seen in the form of animals, birds, or some inanimate object in nature, in the first dreams of fasting became dream spirits, guiding the future of the Indians.⁷ The Ojibwa never



mentioned their dream spirits except in great calamity. Even then it was never done without offering a sacrificial gift of tobacco to them. They had great faith in the power of dreams since they believed that through them the wishes of the Great Spirit were manifested to individuals. To fulfill the dream they had to fast and give a feast. Usually a representation of the dream figure was made of cloth or other material and carried to secure protection from its presence. Medicine men were frequently consulted to interpret dreams and their advice was followed implicitly by the client.

One of the writer's informants told of an instance in which his father was warned by the medicine man that one member of his family was weak. The medicine man interpreted it to mean that one of their family would not live long. Upon hearing that, the informant's father gave a feast, to which he invited his friends. He begged the Great Spirit, if he deemed the request a worthy one, to prolong the life of his child. *Kijie manido* heard his prayer. The boy grew to be well and strong and is still living today at the age of sixty-seven. The Indians were firm in their belief that the Great Spirit was pleased with the

⁷ Cf. R. Benedict, *The concept of the guardian spirit in North America*, AAA-M 29

offerings and granted long life to the child. After relating this happening the informant added that, although restoration of health was almost always granted if it was asked for, this request was not made except in cases in which the Indians knew it would be best for the patient or his family. Their religion, they said, granted long life to them.

That the Ojibwa also believed in evil spirits as well as good, could be readily surmised from the frequent mention made of them by informants, although very few knew their names. The writer's informants mentioned only *Missabe* in connection with the *Windego*, and *Mudji manido* a very bad spirit. Spirits of the deep caused rough water, and the owl carried the bad medicine for the evil doers.

Of all the Ojiwba beliefs perhaps that of *Windego* is one of the most fascinating. This being resembled a human person who took delight in eating human flesh. The Indians feared him very much for he could appear at any time. He was even seen by a whole tribe simultaneously, whom he caused to fall dead from fright at the sound of his voice.

As to the history of the *Windego*,—the writer was informed that at one time there were two factions of Indians, each having its own leader. These two groups were constantly at war with each other. If one group lost its leader, the other chief immediately devoured the Indians of the other faction. Thus the leaders became cannibals. They were big and strong and sometimes grew to a height of three hundred feet.

The belief seemed to be that men were not born *Windegos*; they became such because *Missabe*, an evil spirit, wished to bestow his evil gifts or powers of darkness on the Indians. He tried to do this when they fasted and dreamed of him. If men did not throw off his wicked suggestions, they became *Windegos*, although they did not become aware of this change until they ate uncooked meat or tasted blood. *Windegos* could not be destroyed with clubs, as they had ice inside them. To cure them, medicine men poured boiling grease down the throats of these giants. This had to be done during the first stages in order to have any effect. The ice could be heard sizzling in their throats. A real *Windego* could be destroyed only by another

Windego, or one who was given that power, because it was a gift of the evil spirit.

It was said that last summer a *Windego* existed at Ponemah on Red Lake. Many of the Ojibwa of the surrounding lake region confirmed that statement. It was a full-blooded Indian woman, about twenty-three years of age, who was forced to eat the uncooked meat of wild ducks. Since that time she has had a craving for human flesh and has wished to devour people. The Indians are very worried about her. An intelligent informant of the Indian office who is an Ojibwa, thinks that the *Windego* furnished excellent material for tales to frighten children, but there may be more truth than fiction to the matter.

Writers on the Ojibwa customs have given sufficient evidence to prove that the practice of cannibalism was known among this tribe in earlier times.⁸ None of the writer's informants wished to acknowledge that such a custom existed in their tribe; they explained it as happening only under the stress of hunger, if it happened at all. We know that cases of this kind did occur in White Earth during a famine among the Indians. At Ponsford also there lived a family who ate their own kinsfolk, but the Ojibwa of the surrounding country soon made away with them. One informant told of a *Windego* whom his father knew very well. This was also a woman. Coming, one day, to a group of Indian women, who were fishing on the lake, she ate them all. The next morning a woman was given the power to destroy the *Windego*. She met the latter and took a tree out of the frozen ground. With it she clubbed the woman to death.

The Indians have some very humorous stories to tell about the ridiculous jokes played on the *Windego* by clever Indians, which sound very much like our Jack-the-giant-killer stories.

Another well-known Ojibwa being in whom my informants believed, were the *Memegwicio* or men of the wilderness. Some called them a "kind of monkey." They were somewhat like our fairies, and were described as being about the size of children

⁸ W. W. Warren, *History of the Ojibways*, Coll. Minn. hist. soc., v, St. Paul, 1885, 109-10, gives traditions of cannibalism practised around the period of the Chippewas' stay at La Pointe. Cf. Peter Jones, *History of the Ojebway Indians*, 69-70, as somewhat corrective of Warren.

of ten or eleven years of age. Since their faces were covered with hair, the *Memegwicio* covered them with their hands whenever they noticed anyone approaching. They lived in the rocks on the shores of great bodies of water and were frequently seen paddling their stone boats across the water. The Indians left tobacco, food, or clothes on the rocks for them to keep these beings propitious.

One informant stated that her family heard the *Memegwicio* one summer night near Mille Laes Lake. They hurried down to the shore. When they arrived, they discovered that the *Memegwicio* had stolen their fish from the nets. That seemed to be a favorite trick of these beings. At soon as the *Memegwicio* saw her brothers, they covered their faces and ran away.

Little Buck of Cass Lake informed the writer of a somewhat similar incident. While hunting near Bemidji River, the chief shot a pelican. Just as he went to get it, the *Memegwicio* came along and carried it away. The hunters followed them across the river. Just as they were closing in on them, the *Memegwicio* disappeared. Soon Little Buck heard a voice saying: "My son, give up what you have taken from the Indians." Then the pelican rose from the water, dead, just as it had been killed by the hunters. The men took it home with them in their boats.

The *Memegwicio* were also noted for attempting to carry off Indian maidens. The people of White Earth and Ponsford believed these "little fairies" lived only on the north shore of Lake Superior or where it was equally cold.

Another interesting Algonquian being, of which the Ojibwa often speak, is *Pagak*. This creature was at one time a human being who, through long periods of fasting, had dwindled to a skeleton and who has been forced ever since to walk day and night without rest. He must continue to do this to the end of time. He is a skeleton whose bones rattle as he holloos along the skies in his travels from east to west through space. The writer was told of an instance in which her interpreter heard the call of *Pagak* while she was living in Ebro. It was in the middle of the night. Other members of the family heard the sound at the same time. Then men of the house rose immediately and attempted to follow the sound. They finally located

it. The call could be plainly heard. It sounded as though *Pagak* were sailing along just ahead of them. They could even distinguish his footprints in the snow, but although the men ran after the cry for a mile and a half, they could not overtake it. They said the being made a queer, ticking sound like a clock, "here and there and then it was gone." It had a most paralyzing effect. Although a few of the informants thought the story of *Pagak* was a legend told to frighten mischievous children, most of the Indians declared they had heard him many times.

Pagak was heard in the spring or on the beginning of his flight, then again in the zenith and again at the close. If people were not affected by hearing his call, it meant that they would live a long life. Those who became faint as they heard him pass, knew they would die soon. Some had been warned by their parents not to camp where the trees had been burned as *Pagak* traveled above them. If no trees were there, *Pagak* would be displeased and they would hear him. One of the writer's interpreters suggested that *Windego*, *Pagak*, and *Memegwicio* be classed under supernatural experiences which the Ojibwa did not understand, but most of the informants considered the *Memegwicio* real human beings.

Perhaps one of the most difficult subjects of approach to an Ojibwa is that of the Grand Medicine Society. The Indians are usually very reticent about any of their customs and they are even more so concerning the rites of this organization, so that not only outsiders, but even many of their own tribesmen know little concerning them. The Midewi are almost forced to remain silent on this subject for fear of death or other severe punishment from the *Midé manido*, if they reveal its secrets. One informant explained: "The *Midé manido* would know who told and would hound him through life."

Originally the *Midé* ceremony was taught to the Ojibwa to cure disease and to raise the dead to life. According to their traditions, the four cardinal points permitted the East Wind Being to come to earth to teach this to men. He was born of an Indian couple who had no children. When he had grown to be a young boy, he asked his parents to travel with him to the

end of Lake Superior where Fond du Lac now is. When they had been there four days, a great storm arose, but the boy decided they must return to Madeline Island to assist his cousin who was very ill. The storm subsided as soon as they put their canoe in the water. When they arrived home, they found the parents of their cousin weeping over the dead body of the child.

The East Manido left the parents there, telling them to sing over the boy's body until he returned. The child was laid out in a coffin in the center of the lodge which the East Manido had told them how to make, facing east and west, as the Midé lodge does today. He painted the faces of the old man and his own parents with red and blue alternating. He also gave the old man a drum and a rattle to use to accompany himself during the songs. On the fourth day the East Manido returned to the lodge with three other manidos of the four cardinal points. Each one held a muskrat in his hand as his medicine bag, and blew from it to the coffin. After the last manido had shot at the boy, the latter rose from the coffin, restored to life.

All the instructions which the East Manido gave them, the Ojibwa have always followed scrupulously in the Midé ceremony ever since, even to the position in which the medicine bags were held in their hands and the manner of building the lodge. For many years the Midé was used to assist the Ojibwa, until an evil spirit became jealous of them and put it in the heart of an Indian to kill his four uncles who were chief medicine men. He taught the Ojibwa how to make magic and wicked medicine. As a result, evil now predominates in the world, although in the end, good will triumph.

Another myth also brought into the Midé ceremony is concerned with the Ojibwa personification of *Manibosho*. The Indians believed they were allowed to live through his intercession, at the time when the "New Earth" was formed. Through him they were taught how to appease the Great Spirit and to ward off the ravages of hunger.

Men and women of the tribe became members of the Midewiwin by being initiated into the first four degrees of the society, although there were eight degrees in all. By means of the Midé ceremony the youths were taught the traditions of the tribe, the

sick were assisted through prayers and spirit power, and other members of the Midewiwin received a renewal of spirit power also. The person to be initiated was first given a definite course of instruction which assisted him to go through life. Ceremonies were different for the different degrees, an initiation being necessary for each degree. The initiate was also taught the potency of herbs for good and for evil. He was also urged never to accept any of the teachings of religions of other races, nor to disclose any of the secrets of the Midewiwin.⁹ The members who had been initiated into the society from the first to the eighth degree, were obliged to attend each meeting of the organization.

In the early days this became a great tribal event creating strong bonds of union between all Ojibwa. Today each village performs its own ceremonies of initiation. The rites were the mainspring and center of all the Ojibwa beliefs.

After a messenger was chosen for the ceremonies, he sent out invitations, or sticks, to the members. The persons to be initiated assisted the members to prepare the sweat lodge and the Midé lodge. The sweat lodge was for a ceremonial purpose in the Midewiwin. It was considered a purification in preparation for the other ceremonies which followed.

The Midé lodge itself, in which the regular ceremonies took place, was called in Ojibwa, *Midewegun*. It was a large framework made of saplings, built in the same manner as a wigwam frame, except that it was more rudely constructed. It was nevertheless considered very sacred by the old-time Ojibwa. The framework was in the form of a great oblong, sometimes one hundred or more yards long,—its length varying according to the number of members to attend the meetings,—and about fifteen feet wide and seven feet high. It had no covering on the top, and was only partially covered on the sides with green boughs of the balsam. The Ojibwa say it never rained when they worshipped the Great Spirit. Spectators could see what was going on within, but could not understand its meaning.

⁹ In earlier times the ceremonies must have been more exacting. Warren (*loc. cit.*, 100) states that earlier, during the tribe's stay at La Pointe, the Medawewin rites were practised in their "purest and most original form".

The lodge faced east and west. The priests entered from the east just as did the East Manido and the other three cardinal manidos in the first ceremony. The lodge had an inner as well as an outer court. The lodge was never used twice, neither could any of the materials be employed again. Everything had to be young, clean, and fresh for the Great Spirit.

The meetings were held in the first part of May and, in case of sickness, at any other time. The ceremonies lasted about three weeks, beginning from the rising of the sun and lasting to sundown, each day. No one except a member or one who wished to be initiated, was allowed to enter the lodge during the ceremonies. So strict was this, that the writer was told that if an outsider attended a meeting, he would die at once. Very small children entered the Midewiwin by means of sponsors who explained the ceremonies to them when they attained the use of reason. One informant said he had entered the first two degrees of the society when he was very young. When he was grown up, he decided to go to a Midé ceremony. The Indians noticed him sitting at the side of the wigwam and watched him closely, expecting at any moment to see him fall over dead. When he remained until the end of the ceremony, they were dumbfounded, but when he explained that he had entered the first two degrees as a child, they accepted that as a reason why he was not punished by death during the ceremonies.

On a horizontal pole stretched across the length of the framework, gifts in the form of cloth, blankets, and quilts, were hung. These were used as offerings to the priests, and were presented by the mothers of the initiates. The number varied according to the degree of the initiation. Only the very old members of the tribe attained the highest degrees since several years usually intervened before the next degree was entered.

Those who had gone through the different degrees became leaders of the ceremonies and were called medicine men. The women and men took their places around the sides of the framework. Three poles painted according to the Midé colors, were placed in the lodge. In the center a sort of cross was placed. A few feet west of this cross, sat the initiate. Four old men, members of the upper degrees, representing the manidos of the

four cardinal points, acted as priests. All the members carried their medicine bags which represented the degree which the owners had entered. The priests played upon the medicine drum and rattles. These instruments had to be made of definite structure and in a special way, and together with the songs formed an integral part of the Midewiwin. One informant described the ceremony in this manner: "The altar was the medicine drum. The singer or first leader sat beside it."

Then one of the four old men talked to the initiate in a low tone, at the conclusion of which, he moved around the lodge showing a small white sea-shell in the palm of his hand. The shell is the emblem of the organization. All the traditions of the Midé were associated with animals of the ocean and referred to the formation of the earth after the flood. The leader was followed by the priests singing, "Wa, who, who who," four times. Then the leader said, "Ne, ga ná," four times. Upon coming to the initiate, the three men walked off to the west end of the lodge while the leader exclaimed, "Ne, mi da mug" four times, to which the congregation groaned, "Ha!" (Throughout all ceremonies of the Ojibwa it will be noticed that the number four is constantly used. When questioned as to the reason for this, the informants were indefinite. The present writer believes that this may be associated with the Ojibwa's great respect for the cardinal points.) The priest then began a loud speech to the tribe concerning the sea-shell and its significance. One informant said his words were like this: "As the sea-shell reflected the sun's rays above the water, it gave light and warmth to the Ojibwa, but when it disappeared, the tribe suffered many hard things and forgot about *Kijie manido*." (It will be noted that this informant used the term *Kijie manido*, not *Midé manido*. He claimed that *Kijie manido* was the highest and that *Midé manido* was under him). This represented the migrations of the tribe from the Atlantic Ocean westward to Ontario, to Boweting (Sault Ste. Marie) and to Noningwunakauning (La Pointe Island).

The mothers of the youths had to leave while the medicine man instructed the initiates. He told them how to live right,

as one informant expressed it,—not to steal, not to lie, not to commit murder, to be kind to the aged, and to respect women. This last injunction was very important to the Ojibwa. He also showed them how to overcome temptations that would beset them during life. The candidates were then given "spirit power" which was personified by the sea-shell. This was shot from the medicine bags of the priests and of those present. The force of the shell was neutralized in a member of the Midewiwin, but it would prove deadly to an outsider. The person receiving the spirit power manifested its presence by showing the shell in his mouth. The members placed their medicine bags on the initiate after he had been prostrated by the force of the shell.

Songs were sung for the different degrees and members also danced and sang around the lodge during part of the ceremony. Each degree also gave the young initiate a knowledge of the use of certain herbs. The higher degrees taught the use of subtle poisons. Different kinds of animals guarded the entrance of the lodge in the various degrees and represented certain standing in the Midewiwin. A weasel skin was used as a medicine bag in the Midewiwin of Mille Laes to signify one of the degrees of that society. Skins of the mink, owl, otter, bearpaws, and snake were used to symbolize the degree and type of cure which could be effected by them. Dogs were sacrificed and laid out at the entrances of the lodge, their number signifying the degree entered.

One of the powers of the Midewiwin, we have said, was that of curing the sick. This was done by the medicine man who prayed to the *Midé manido* for the sick person. The latter was often brought into the lodge for the ceremony. He was shot with spirit power from the medicine bags, according to the original use of the *Midé*.

Another power of the *Midé* was that of punishing offenders. This was done by the use of poisonous herbs or medicines made from poisons. Members of the last degrees of the Midewiwin were taught how to concoct various types of medicine by cooking copper, iron, and gold ores with parts of the bodies of animals, snakes and even human beings. The writer was told that the part just around the heart of human beings was especially val-

able for medicine bags. Since very few Indians attained the highest degrees, the Ojibwa looked upon the medicine men as important factors in the social, political, and religious circles of the tribe. They even thought no harm could ever come to a medicine man because he had the power to cure himself. If he was poisoned, it was believed he could, by the power of antidotes which he alone knew how to make, stop the circulation of the medicine into the blood stream.

In the old days medicine men were the brains of the tribe. They were the acknowledged teachers of folklore and instructors in the Ojibwa religion, but they were usually repugnant old men, who, through their power, were greatly feared. They desecrated women and committed atrocious crimes. They were the instigators of black magic.¹⁰ The Ojibwa believed medicine men had the power to deform or harm people by giving them poison in their food. One informant told the writer that members of the tribe thought that the strange deaths and witchcraft which swept over the New England states in the days of the colonies were caused by evil medicine made by the Indians.

The teachings of the Midewiwin were scratched on birch bark scrolls and were shown to the young men upon entrance into the society. Although these were crude pictographs representing the ceremonies, they show us that the Ojibwa were advanced in the development of picture "writing." Some of them were painted on bark.

A large birch bark roll which is known to have been used in the Midewiwin at Mille Laes for five generations and perhaps many generations before, is now in the possession of Mr. H. D. Ayer of the Indian Trading Post at Mille Laes. It was last owned by old Tom Skinaway, the last medicine man of that tribe and one whom Miss Densmore interviewed and whom she mentions in her "Chippewa Customs".¹¹ It is composed of

¹⁰ Warren (*loc. cit.*, 109) calls them "satanic" in his account, from current oral traditions, of the earlier cannibalistic practices of the medicine men around the La Pointe period.

¹¹ BAE-B 86, 4, 146. The writer also received information from him that is incorporated in the present paper.

four sections, representing the four degrees of the Midewiwin. The crude pictures reading from right to left are written in red ochre. A bear, representing the guardian spirit of those to be initiated, stands at the entrance of the lodge, as well as in every corner, to help the young man in need of his aid. The bear was always considered sacred by the Ojibwa, so his foot-steps are seen approaching the lodge. He accompanies the initiate through the different ceremonies. Several men are pictured standing near the entrance ready to perform the ceremony, while the different animals or evil spirits which have to be overcome by the young man are shown. Guards are there ready to help them if he will but take their advice. Moons, representing time, and circles, representing the number of meetings which have been held in Mille Laes, are drawn on the outside of the roll.

Each member received a medicine bag upon entrance into the Midewiwin, containing medicine made of different herbs, according to the degree entered. These bags were considered very valuable. They contained all the Ojibwa deemed most sacred and were always buried with the owners. One informant told the writer that his cousin had been buried without her medicine bag. Soon they noticed a strange light which shone over her grave. The Indians knowingly smiled to themselves for they felt they knew the reason of the strange phenomenon, while white people wrote it up in big headlines in the newspapers. The relatives opened the grave and put in the medicine bag. The informant said the Indians knew his cousin wanted her medicine bag and she could not rest in the next world until she had it.

The functions of the medicine man should not be confused with those of the *djasakid*. There is a distinct differentiation between the two. The *djasakid* or juggler was thought to have been given supernatural power to pry into the future, to find lost articles, and to answer questions which no ordinary mortal could answer. He was known by the shaking tent ceremony. To prove that he had supernatural aid, the juggler, in a spectacular exhibition, freed himself from tight cords with which he was bound. He also predicted future events. An informant¹² de-

¹² Mr. Roy of Cass Lake

scribed the ceremony and the lodge or tent which he helped to build at Knife Lake, as follows: The men placed in the ground, several feet apart in the form of a circle, sixteen poles of iron-wood about twelve feet high, which represented the degrees of the juggler's art or steps to the Great Spirit. Around these poles were bound willow hoops of the same number. A pole was placed in the center of the framework, while an opening was left in the middle of the top. A canvas was wound around the poles, leaving a small door on one side. When the lodge was completed, the juggler sent out an invitation to those whom he wished to attend the ceremony, by sending them a pipe to smoke. When the Indians arrived, the juggler sang a song and was bound with strong ropes so he could not move. Four men carried him around the lodge eight times and threw him into the tent. In a few minutes the tent began to shake. Soon the juggler threw out the rope which the men had used to secure him. When the tent came to a standstill, the juggler asked if anyone in the audience wished to ask a question of the Great Spirit. Soon a woman did so and in a moment the juggler called to the turtle for an answer. The juggler called on the different animal spirits, but he called on the turtle to act as messenger to receive the information from the Great Spirit. In this instance, the question was concerning the whereabouts of money which had been lost. Often questions concerned the cause of sickness, especially if it was thought not to be of a natural cause.

The informants said that the turtle *Mikenak*,—or *Michika*, as one man called it,—was the animal spirit chosen as the messenger by the *djasakid* because, although this animal was the one of the slowest-moving on earth, it was considered the fastest in spirit. The juggler wore a badge made of the skin of this manido. Upon the departure of the turtle, the tent began to shake, swaying from north to south and then from east to west, and did not come to a standstill until the turtle returned to give the answer from the Great Spirit. The approach of the turtle could be heard by a whistling sound as he dropped from the top to the bottom of the tent. Voices could be heard inside the tent, after which the answer was given by the juggler. He told the woman just where the money could be found and the writer

was told it was discovered exactly where the *djasakid* had said it was.

Formerly definite songs were sung for ceremonies, while a drum made of the skin tightly drawn over white or black ash was a part of the performance, and a rattle made of birch bark with deer hide stretched over it with stone inside, was used. Today, these instruments are sometimes entirely omitted. The Ojibwa word for shaking tent is *chesakkon*.¹³

One informant told the writer that on a certain occasion the *djasakid* informed a man that his son was ill. The father did not believe him as his son was in a boarding school and he had had no news of his illness. On his arrival at the school, the father found his son at the point of death.

Mr. Caswell of Cass Lake told of a young Chippewa man who was given the hand of a maiden of the tribe. According to the Ojibwa custom, he went to live with his wife's parents. One day he became lonesome for his old home, so he went away, but did not return. The *djasakid* was consulted about his whereabouts. He went into a trance and then traced upon a map which he made the path which the young man had taken. The men went in search of him, with the result that they found him just where the *djasakid* had indicated.

Many of the writer's informants had great faith in the shaking tent ceremony, because, as they affirmed, they had seen it with their own eyes. Anyone was allowed to question the juggler provided he gave him payment of food, clothing, or tobacco. The juggler received this power in the beginning from a dream which he had as a result of fasting. The fast sometimes lasted for a period of ten days. The juggler fasted also before the beginning of the ceremonies. According to some informants, the juggler had to master a clever sort of ventriloquism; others admitted there were some fakirs among their number; but many believed the spirit of the turtle could do many wonderful things. The writer was told of instances in which a person's spirit was taken from his wigwam where he lay, to the tent of a *djasakid*.

¹³ This corresponds to the *jesako* of the Central Algonkin (C. Wissler, American Indian, 2d ed., N. Y., 1922, 201).

many miles away. Often the spirit did not return and the man would be found dead in his wigwam. Only by means of the power of another *djasakid* could the magic of the *djasakid* be resisted. Sometimes a medicine man was also a *djasakid*, but not always.

The Ojibwa had great faith in the power of magic charms of various kinds, among them, hunting charms, love charms, cradle charms, and charms to cure illness.

Of the charms used on the cradle board, pretty little cushions of buckskin were made in which the navel string was placed. Often the father took this string with him on his hunting trips to bring him good luck. A bit of the navel string of girl babies was put into a tree, so that when the baby grew up she would know how to chop wood well. A charm of the boy's navel string placed in a bear's den, was believed to make the boy a good hunter. Care had to be taken not to place this charm in the ashes or the child would burn. Little nets made of yarn were often seen on the hoop of the cradle board to protect the child from evil and to "catch the colds before the child caught them."¹⁴

Love charms consisted of a love potion which was obtained from the medicine man and worn in the clothing. Often the medicine consisted of some powder made of herbs noted for this power, mixed with quicksilver. Frequently, the woman wore a lock of her beloved's hair and made cuts or figurines representing the man she wished to attract. Even today at Red Lake the young women wear these charms to attract the other sex.¹⁵ Medicine was sometimes injected into the heart of a figurine. One informant said that he had had this charm worked on him. He wanted to be rid of this infatuation which he felt coming upon him, so he went to a woman at White Earth to buy some kind of an antidote. He bought a pinch of powder, for which he paid three dollars. When he returned home, he placed the charm on four hot stones, around which he wrapped a blanket. Soon the latter was wringing wet from the hot moisture. He

¹⁴ Information given by Mrs. John Budrow, Ponsford, Minn.

¹⁵ These were seen by the writer at the Government School there.

applied this to his head and in four applications the cure became effective.¹⁶ Round or queer-shaped stones were also carried for love charms.

The Ojibwa considered the bear the most sacred of animals. In dressing the skin of this animal, they never cut the hide crosswise, but only in one long piece. This was done to show respect to the bear because the Indians thought that at one time the bear was a human being who had been cursed and was made to take the form of an animal. The bear has been mentioned as being the guardian spirit of the Midé. Definite hunting songs were sung before going upon the hunt and certain hunting rites were observed. The hunter often asked his family to blacken their faces and fast during his absence, to bring him luck in the hunt. He too did this. The departing Indian hunters also carried sweet flag and other herbs in their pockets to attract the deer and other animals by the sweet odor. Hunters also chewed and smoked these herbs to make their breath pleasing to the deer. Often the claws or teeth of animals seen in dreams were worn to bring the wearer good luck.

Bones of animals were thrown away or given to the dogs. The Ojibwa did not consider it necessary to burn the bones in order to show respect to the animals, as some tribes did. The only parts of the bear which were used for purposes of divination were the bear-paws. These were also used as medicine bags in the Midé. The finding of a rabbit foetal inclusion, between the flesh and skin of the rabbit, was thought to have brought good luck. The rabbit foetal inclusion was also passed through the rabbit snare to act as a kind of decoy. It was called a "magic bait." Most of the Indians had these, but none of them would show them to the writer. Some had them in their medicine bags. The spleen of the deer was hung on a tree by hunters as a gift to the Great Spirit.

Since the Ojibwa were so helpless in regard to the knowledge of medicine in case of illness and knew no cures except through the power of certain herbs, they naturally turned to the super-

¹⁶ Told by Mr. Northrup of Fond du Lac. His uncle was a medicine man.

natural to help in diseases. Sickness was considered a bad spirit which had to be driven out; in his place a good spirit had to be brought in. Noise made with rattles was supposed to drive the bad spirit away. Besides the power of the Midé or Grand Medicine, the medicine man, after learning from the Great Spirit the cause of the illness, resorted to magic. He swallowed and regurgitated four small bones with which he touched the person who was ill. This was supposed to give the cure. One informant said the medicine man pounded himself over the shoulders with his rattle as he regurgitated the bones. Several informants said they had seen sick persons cured this way. On asking concerning the meaning, the writer was told that blowing through the bones signified the sending out of the bad spirit, while the sucking through the bones meant bringing in the good spirit. Perfect quiet had to exist during this ceremony, else the medicine man could not regurgitate the bones. One informant said some sort of bird, a woodpecker or a chickadee, inside of the person who was ill, would take the illness. The bones would find the afflicted parts.

The Ojibwa still believe in many signs and omens, carried over from ancient times. Some of these are:

If the Indian felt a touch on his shoulder, it meant that someone was coming to visit him or that his pack would be filled with game. If his mouth shook, it meant he was going to cry or hear bad news. If his chin jumped, it was a sign he would eat grease or fat meat.

The following omens were signified by the jumping of one's leg: that he would be killed; that he would have to run for his life; or, that in the chase, he would run after some animal.

When fishing, the gun was never placed near the net, or else no fish would be taken. If women touched the gun or bow and arrow, it brought bad luck. If nothing was taken in the hunt, it was a sign of death. Informants said the animals saw the Indian's spirit in mourning and fled away.

If his eye jumped, the Indian interpreted it to signify that he would have a pleasant surprise or that he would cry.

The Ojibwa considered it bad luck to return to the wigwam for something they had forgotten. They would not return until they had first sat down to smoke. Some even thought it necessary to talk to someone before going back.

Two types of weather magic were the buzzer and snow man. The Indians warned the children not to play with either and also, not to blow on grass for whistles, for this would bring the snakes, or cause big wind storms. They were also told not to punch holes on the basswood leaves with their breath, as it would cause rain.

The Ojibwa had never heard of the following well-known omens: If the chicadees followed the Indians on the trail, there would be little to eat; if the ravens were seen to turn a somersault in the air while flying, the Indians would have good luck.

The Ojibwa believed in the immortality of the soul. There evidently was no idea of punishment in the future life. Everyone seemed destined to a place where man's occupations and enjoyments were similar to those here on earth, and so he would need his personal belongings as his dishes, food, knife, and tobacco. These were left in or on the grave. A favorite gift was a small copper kettle in which the dead could cook his own food on his four days' journey. There seemed to have been no association of the dead with the Supreme Being as Master of Death. Evidently the dead did not go to the Supreme Being. The only offerings to the dead seemed to be food given to the dead at the feast upon his passing from this life, and the placing of food or grease on the fire for the dead before they partook of their own meals. Many of the informants did this. There seemed to have been no fear of the ghosts of the dead as long as the mourners performed the customary rites. Fetishes or figurines or spirit bundles were worn by the woman and were carried about with her in the wigwam. The spirit bundle contained a lock of hair of the deceased, wrapped in a blanket. Sometimes the figure was three feet high. The woman fed it and spoke to it as though it was alive. Later she gave the food to someone else. The spirit bundle was usually carried for a year.

By and large, from testimony gathered from informants, the writer infers that the primitive religion of the Ojibwa had a great influence on the social and moral conduct of the Indians of northern Minnesota. The Supreme Being cult seemed to be well established. This was shown through their offerings of food and talks to the Great Spirit. "Conjuring" or shamanistic practices centering largely around the shaking tent rite, carried on by *djasakids*, professional and fakirs, had an animistic trend although magic was brought in. The conjuring and Supreme Being rites seemed to be very closely related, since Mikenak, the chief spirit of the shaking tent, was directly responsible to the Great Spirit. Hunting observances did not tie up with the Supreme Being cult, except for the offering of the first game and the throwing of meat on the fire.

These data we have presented check up so far as comparison is possible, with the data in our published sources on Ojibwa religion and with information which the writer received from two missionaries now working in the different parts of the territory covered in this field work.¹⁷ A few Christian ideas may well have colored some of this information, but many of the informants have not accepted the teachings of any Christian denomination. As far as the writer can judge, the picture presented seems to be a fairly true one of the magico-religious culture of the primitive Ojibwa of northern Minnesota.

¹⁷ Rev. Benno Watrin, O.S.B., Ponsford, Minn., and Rev. Simon Lampe, O.S.B., Red Lake, Minn.

THE GAMELLA INDIANS

CURT NIMUENDAJÚ *

Belém do Pará, Brazil

AS far back as our historical sources extend two Indian strains are recognizable in the population of the area now forming the state of Maranhão. The unquestionably older element, occupying the center and the south, embraces Gé tribes, including two linguistically and culturally distinct branches of the stock,—the Timbira in the north and the Akwé in the south. The more recent strain is made up of Tupí tribes, which had settled in the northwest and may likewise be divided into two groups. The dialects of the "he" group—so named from the pronoun of the first person singular—correspond to a somewhat earlier wave of immigrants, represented in this region by the Guajajára and the Amanayé. The speakers of the "če" dialects, on the other hand, in all probability did not immigrate into the area until after the discovery of Brazil, coming from the south; they are here represented only by the Tupinambá.

At present the Akwé and the Tupinambá are both extinct in Maranhão, while the Timbira and Guajajára persist.

Probably the entire coast of Maranhão and far beyond it in an easterly as well as westerly direction was once occupied by a primitive tribe of fishermen, the Taramembé, part of whose habitat was only subsequently seized by the Tupinambá. The remnants of the Taramembé became extinct in the first half of the last century before anything beyond a few personal names was recorded of their speech. From these and the sparse statements about their culture they seem to have been akin neither to the Tupí nor to the Timbira.

The entire northeast of the state and vast tracts east thereof are ethnographically almost entirely unknown. This is the part of Maranhão that first received a fairly dense population of

* Translated by Robert H. Lowie. The material was gathered through a grant by the Institute of Social Sciences of the University of California.



settlers. Sources of the 17th and 18th century mention a dozen tribes: Guaná, Uruaty, Cahieahy, Guaxioná, Aranhi, Suassuhý, Arayó, Anapurú, Guanaré, Coroatá, Barbado and Gamella. The language of all these tribes has remained unknown, while the scant comments on their culture indicate that this was not uniform and that once more we are dealing neither with congeners of the Tupí nor of the Timbira, though possibly some of the groups belonged to some other branch of the Gê family. Of the tribes mentioned, the Guaná were peaceable farmers; others, e. g. the Cahieahy, warlike nomad hunters.

At the beginning of the 19th century, except for the Gamella, these tribes survived, if at all, only in insignificant remnants, which completely disappeared by the middle of the century. The Gamella of Codó were exterminated in 1856, the only word preserved of their speech being "Beretrotopama," the name of their last chief. Of the Gamella near Penalva only a handful lived until the turn of the 20th century, and not a single word of their language is reported.

Again and again the designations "Timbira" and "Gamella" have been interpreted as synonymous terms for the same people. However, Ribeiro, familiar with both, sharply distinguishes them: "Timbira e Gamella unicos dialectos que presentemente se conhecem entre o gentilismo que habita estes limites." The Guajajára, it must be noted, remained unknown to him. He continues as follows: "A nação Gamella, que apenas em dois distritos espalha a sua prole, supondo-se por isso poderoso, não forma com tudo mais do que tres ou quatro povoações; porem a nação Timbirá, superabundantemente numerosa, tem absorvido com innumeráveis aldeas quasi todo o ambito central desses terrenos, que ainda estão por nos deshabitados."¹ Thus, he not only points out the linguistic difference, but also contrasts the "nação Gamella" and the "nação Timbira." Pereira do Lago similarly draws a sharp line between the Gamella and the Timbira of the lower Pindaré region. In this context the Portuguese word "gamella," which denotes a wooden bowl or platter, refers to the lip-plug.

The earliest reference to the Gamella appears in the chronicle of Piauhy by Pereira de AlenCASTRE: "The Gamella, Ginapapo (?) and Guaranz (= Guanaré), who lived on the banks of the Parnahyba in Piauhy, migrated to Maranhão and the waste lands of Pará subsequently to the general uprising [of the Indians of North Piauhy] in 1713."

From 1747 on, the Gamella are reported from the Rio Mearim. They probably occupied the region of the lakes and inundated steppes between Bacabal and the mouth of the Rio Grajahú. In the year mentioned the Capitão-mor of the Rio Mearim,

¹ Francisco de Paula Ribeiro, (a), § 3, 4.

accompanied by a missionary, traveled up-stream and apparently visited the Gamella. In 1751 the Jesuits were charged with the conversion of the tribe, which was then settled in eleven villages, but the attempt of P. Antonio Machado failed, presumably above all because he came with an armed escort ("bandeira"). The manuscript of his "*Relação da Missão dos Gamellas*" is deposited in the library of Evora; to my regret this presumably most important document on the Gamella is inaccessible for me.

By 1796 the only remaining settlement of the eleven Gamella villages on the Mearim was Lapella (on the left bank, 15 km above the mouth of the Grajahú), and this, too, had "dwindled down to nothing." Simultaneously there is mention for the first time of a Gamella settlement at Cajary, in the lake region on the north side of the lower Pindaré. Apparently, then, toward the end of the 18th century the Gamella had abandoned the lower Mearim, pushing somewhat further northwest to the Pindaré, where the historians of the Jesuit missions Maracú (= Vianna) and Carará (= Monção) had hitherto known only about Guajajára. As late as 1820 Pereira do Lago reports wild Gamella on the south side of the Rio Pindaré, two leguas south of Monção on Lake Piragimimbaua.

In 1819 there were doubtless in Maranhão two separated Gamella tribes, settled among hordes of Timbira,—the Gamella of Vianna and those of Codó. Given the sparse and inaccurate statements at our disposal, we must reckon with the possibility that these groups may have been not merely two locally differentiated divisions of one people, but two distinct peoples sharing merely lip-plugs and a hostile attitude toward neo-Brazilians.

The Gamella of Vianna² are perhaps identical with P. João Daniel's (ca. 1750 ?) exceptionally tall Indians with dish-like lip-plugs "on which they place food and drink, thence noisily sipping it into the mouth." Ribeiro also describes their use of the lip-disk as a plate, while according to Prazeres they hurled the food set on the lip-disk into their mouths by contraction of their lips, "which makes them look horrible and awful."

² Daniel, 183. Ribeiro (a), § 23-24; (b), 39-40. Lago, 395, 396, 410, 412, 414. Prazeres, 137. Marques, "Indios".

About 1820 the territory of these Indians began back of the left bank of the Pindaré, between what is now called the Engenho Central and Vianna, and extended thence northwestwards to the Upper Tury. Their also living on the south side of the Pindaré has already been mentioned.

Ribeiro, too, emphasizes the fact that the Indians are tall, well-built and, as a result of their forest habitat, of light skin color. The lip-plug, according to him, was of wood. Lago, who visited the Gamella in their settlement near Monçao, says they stretched the lower lip and ears from 3 to 4 inches, i. e., about corresponding to the size of the ear-plugs now worn by the Canella and Krahó. Although he watched them at their meals, he does not refer to their laying food on the lip-disk. They went naked except that the women used a leaf covering and painted themselves with urucú. Their grass huts were almost round, 20 palmos (4.4 m) in diameter and 12 palmos (2.64 m) in height, i. e. considerably larger than the beehive huts of the Timbira. Weapons and quantities of sweet-potatoes were deposited with the corpse, which was buried in sitting posture in the hut; this, however, was abandoned on the occurrence of a second death. Their weapons were large arrows and bows, as well as a hilted sword-club four fingers in width and 4 palmos (88 cm) long. The Timbira equivalent is usually considerably longer. Lago was unable to detect any outward religious cult. A dying blind man was treated with indifference because he lacked kin. They were indolent, preferring theft to farming. On the numerous lakes of their region they devoted themselves to fishing.

A statement reproduced by Ribeiro indicates that their settlement in Penalva goes back to José Telles da Silva's efforts, but after the founder's departure most of the Indians left to live in the woods with hardly any outside intercourse. The date is uncertain, but in 1796 a Gamella aldea is located at Capivary near Penalva, though they were probably never settled in Penalva itself.

Martius calls the Gamella "Acobú." This is the name of the tribe or tribes among the Timbira, who designate as *haka-po* "a flat lower lip." Martius carried his inclination to use the final

syllables of tribal names as a classificatory criterion to the extent of uniting five groups—the Acobû, Bucobû, Busseti, Temembû, and Goanabû—into a branch of the Gê family in a wider sense. The last two names—properly Temembó and Uanapú—I am unable to explain; the remainder are to be translated as follows:

Acobû: see above

Bucobû: (Pohl's Bucobiyi), the Pukópye (sometimes pronounced Pukóboye) west of the upper Grajahú; a Timbira tribe.

Busseti: (Martius translates Bús-été "the true Bû," from étê, Tupi for "genuine"). This is the Timbira name for the Savante-Serente: pu-če-ti, "big penis-sheath."

Thus, there is no warrant for a tribal group of Bû(s). Ribeiro, who heard the name, already declares his inability to verify its existence.

In 1810, after the Gamella of Vianna had attacked and menaced this place, Ribeiro undertook a punitive expedition against them, burning down their village and destroying their small plantations. The Gamella had fled before him, killing their aged and sick to forestall their capture. They had protected the approach to their villages and their retreat by bamboo caltrops.

Lago mentions two attacks by the Gamella (1818 and 1819) on a right affluent of the upper Tury and four in 1820 several leguas from Monção, near which locality there were then three villages of tame Gamella,—Guarapiranga, Capivary, and Cajary—with a total population of 280. Another Gamella village, Jejuhy, further up the Pindaré, was deserted. The site of Guarapiranga is no longer ascertainable; probably it was the village nearest to Monção. Cajary is the name of the lake on which Penalva is situated, but the location of the Gamella village cannot be determined today. Capivary is a lake northwest of Penalva, the Gamella village was on the west shore of the point of land called "Ponta do Armazem." In 1847 a hundred Gamella lived between Lago Cajary and the Estrada do Tapuio, somewhat below Monção, but seventeen years later there were only a few survivors.

The last gathering-place of the Gamella was the western shore of Lago Capivary, where their last chief, Julião, died in the middle of the 'eighties. In the first decade of the 20th century the last more or less pure individuals died there, in 1930 the last old woman of mixed blood still able to make some bungling use of the Gamella language.

Some of the old Sertão inhabitants of western Pará erroneously assume that the Tembé, a Tupí tribe extending over the territory of the Gurupy, Guamã and Acará, are descendants of the old Gamella. The opinion rests on the use of a *Lagenaria* lip-disk by the ancestors of the Tembé, as described by the present members of the tribe themselves. For *tembé* means "lower lip," and among the Amanayé this tribe was known as *Tame-hu, Big Lower Lip*.

Sparse as are the reports on the Gamella of Vianna, the literature on those of Codó is still scantier.³ In 1819 they inhabited the bush forests of the river area of the Rio Codoinho, which near Codó empties into the Itapicurú from the left. In the west their neighbors were the Timbira tribes of the lower Mearim; in the south there was another Timbira group, the hostile Čákamekra (= Matteiros); in the southeast, east, and north they roamed as far as the Itapicurú and down this stream as far as Cantanhede ($3^{\circ} 40'$ s. lat.), i. e. over the entire former territory of the Barbado. They were far more warlike than their Vianna congeners, and all bandeiras sent against them from Caxias failed in their efforts. In 1794 one of these armed expeditions, led by Felix do Rego and Domingos Lopes, succeeded in surrounding the more northern of their two villages, but the Gamella managed to drag out the negotiations so that the other village was able to send reinforcements, thus necessitating the flight of the bandeira. According to Ribeiro, they had repeatedly taken captives and also furnished an asylum to fugitive Negro slaves, who did their bit to circumvent peace. Saint-Adolphe also declares that the woods round Codó had always been a place of refuge for fugitive Negro slaves. There were reports, later proved false, of a large lake, the Lagoa da

³ Ribeiro (a), § 31-34; (b), 40. Marques Lagoa da Matta.

Matta, near the headwaters of the Codozinho. Starting from the Mearim in 1820, the following year from the Itapicurú, Pereira do Lago made two vain attempts to penetrate to this locality, which, he relates, was infested within a radius of 12 leguas by Gamella and "Guajajara"—the latter term presumably designating the Timbira of the lower Mearim.

In 1856 the Gamella of Codó were overtaken by fate: President Antonio Cruz Machado ordered the construction of a high-road from Barra do Corda to Caxias, the task devolving on one Frederico Augusto Souza, who was simultaneously "Director" of the Čókamekra (=Matteiros), a Timbira tribe. He had at his disposal 100 Indians, probably Guajajára, and a small military detachment. Official sources yielded no further data, but the Ramkókamekra relate that Souza asked them for an auxiliary troop, whereupon a number of warriors, led by their then chief Cadete, joined him. Souza ordered his allies to surround the Gamella village without killing anyone; all were to be captured alive. To the leaders of the Ramkókamekra, it appeared absurd to return from a raid without killing an enemy. Hence, when the Gamella chief became visible, Cadete shot at him, wounding him in the arm. Seizing a pestle, the wounded man vigorously belabored his assailant, who was hard put to it until a fellow-tribesman killed the Gamella chief. Two or three others were also slain, but the majority succeeded in fleeing into the woods. The troops, however, occupied the water-holes, caught the first Gamella driven there by thirst, and sent them back to the other fugitives with promises of safety, which led to their surrender. They were transported to São Luiz do Maranhão, whence none of them returned.

A divergent account, evidently based on Gonçalves Dias', appears in the first volume of Rocha Pombo's *História do Brasil*. He, too, dates the extinction of the Gamella back to Cruz Machado's administration. A Negro slave, sent by his master as a pretended fugitive, is said to have betrayed the Indians, who were captured and sent to Maranhão, where they were distributed among the citizenry. However, they escaped from the houses and were re-arrested on the streets. Their chief Beretrotopama, looking out of a window, saw his tribesmen captured by the

police and protested against this treatment. When no attention was paid to him, he committed suicide by leaping out of the window. The Gamella were henceforth made to work in the Arsenal and became extinct.

Possibly both narratives are correct, referring to distinct settlements of the Gamella of Codó.

The traditions of the Ramkókamekra describe these Gamella as sturdy folk, though no taller than themselves. They cut off the hair on the front part of the head—and wore a wooden lip-plug not over an inch in thickness. Probably it had once been larger since a plug of the size mentioned would hardly warrant the Timbira designation of the tribe as Haka-po, "Flat and Wide Lower Lip." They had extraordinarily powerful bows, tilled the soil, lived in gable-roofed huts, and slept on mats. The Ramkókamekra and Čákamekra did not consider themselves as in any way related to the Gamella, declaring that their language was radically distinct, so that it certainly cannot be classed as Timbira.

In March 1936 I took an opportunity to determine what might survive of the Gamella of Lake Capivary. An eleven-hour trip by motor-boat brought me from São Luiz do Maranhão to the little town Vianna, the old Jesuit mission Maracú for the Guajajára on a lake of the same name. On the same morning I crossed Lake Maracú in a skiff manned by two men and went up the flooded valley of the Rio Cajary, which unites that lake with the Lago Cajary. The high water, which still reached *terra firma* everywhere, put great obstacles in the way of a survey. With a low stage of the water the lakes contract markedly and except for several watercourses all the lowlands are transformed into a grassy plain. After four hours I arrived in Penalva, where the Rio Cajary flows out of the lake of that name. On the other side of its exit Raymundo Lopes found (1919) the remains of old Indian pile-dwellings with traces of a culture reminiscent of the Amazon Valley.

The following morning I took another skiff with two men on to Lago Capivary. The trip was in part rendered arduous by the flooded woods and the water plants acting as snags in the streams. After four hours and a half we landed at Ponta do

Armazem, the one-time seat of Julião, the last Gamella chief. The surviving mixed-breeds, who regard themselves as descendants of the ancient Gamella, live a legua further west-northwest in forest territory, by the sources of the Gemedor brook, which flows into the Lago Capivary from the west. The following morning I arrived there and was hospitably received in old Maria Cafuza's spacious palm-thatch house. Her grandmother had still been a pure Gamella, and Maria is generally reckoned the best custodian of old Gamella tradition today. I remained here for six days, hoping to discover something about the culture and, above all, the speech of the old Gamella, but the results proved lamentably meager.

Some thirty to forty persons scattered over the vicinity in single-family huts preserve the tradition of descent in the fourth generation—from this or that Gamella woman. Since that time crossing has occurred almost exclusively with the Afro-Brazilians inhabiting the shores of Lago Capivary; accordingly the Indian traits of these hybrids have been so thoroughly masked by Negro characteristics that hardly any one would infer Indian descent from their appearance. At most three individuals must be excepted as still revealing traces of Indian ancestry.

These people spoke the customary Portuguese of the rural neo-Brazilian population of the region. Their material culture revealed not a single feature distinguishing them from neighbors unconnected with the Gamella. Their character and views likewise preserved nothing of their Indian heritage. Their views about Indians were as fantastically incorrect as those in vogue among the other neo-Brazilians of the locality. In demeanor they were amiable, accommodating and modest, causing me not the least trouble during my residence there.

Old Maria took the greatest pains to tell me whatever she had heard her grandmother tell about the old Gamella. Above all she painstakingly recalled all the Gamella words she could recollect during my visit. Notwithstanding her trouble, this yielded only 19 vocables, viz.:

<i>tatá</i>	fire	<i>yopopó</i>	jaguar
<i>purú</i> ♂	membrum	<i>kokói</i>	monkey
<i>sebú</i> ♀	"	<i>pohoné</i>	horse
<i>katú-brohó</i>	Negro	<i>azutí</i>	cattle
<i>katú-koyaká</i>	White? Indian?	<i>kuréká</i>	domestic fowl
<i>múisi</i>	brother-in-law	<i>kyoipé</i>	tree
<i>kokeáto</i>	pot	<i>anéno</i>	tobacco
<i>kutubé</i>	gourd bowl	<i>birizu</i>	pepper
<i>tamarána</i>	club	<i>tomabéto</i>	thick
<i>kasapó</i>	knife		

The following comments may be offered. The word *kokói*, "monkey," is Timbira, the words for "fire" and "club" are Tupí. Apart from these three loan-words the list indicates no kinship with any known Brazilian language. This is the more remarkable because of the several terms for cultural loans—knife, horse, cattle, fowl—which usually spread with great facility among originally unrelated languages. As to the word *katú-koyaká* for "White" or "Indian", Martius mentions as dwelling in the Pindaré region "the Coyaca, a tribe of white bush folk," of alleged Dutch descent. In Timbira, *áká* means "white."

So far as this handful of words permits any conclusion, Gamella as spoken at Vianna must be treated as isolated.

Old Maria's inserting one Timbira and two Tupí words is explained by the fact that during her grandfather's chieftaincy among the Gamella a number of "western Indians," including Guajajára, Amanayé and Timbira, settled with him. Hence, what I learnt about ancient Gamella culture may also in part refer to these alien tribes, whom Maria designated as "western" in contrast to the "eastern" Gamella, whom she regarded as having come from the east. As appears from my initial discussion, this corresponds with the historical facts.

Maria had heard her grandmother tell that formerly manioc was grated on the spiny root of the paxiuba palm (not in Timbira fashion on the bark of the aroeira). The fire-drill was made of urucú, cotton, or envireira wood, while the Timbira and Guajajára used only urucú wood for the purpose. Maria

herself had seen fish covered with a mass of sweet manioc and wrapped in leaves so they could be baked under hot stones and covered with earth. She also remembered how bacaba fruits were made soft in the subsoil water heated with hot rocks in a pit by the edge of a brook. Both processes, unknown to the Guajajára, are still in vogue among the Timbira and suggest that the Gamella were originally ignorant of pottery.

Bows, arrows, and club did not vanish until the extinction of the last pure Indians, hence Maria and several others clearly remembered their appearance. The bow was round on the outside, flat on the string side, like the Guajajára and Timbira equivalents. The arrows had either bridge ("Stegfiederung") or sewed feathering ("Nahtfiederung"); the occurrence of the latter was described to me in such detail that no doubt is possible. The Guajajára and Timbira are acquainted with sewed feathering, but at least today no longer employ this procedure. The Timbira say they borrowed it from the Gamella of Codó. Among the Amanayé and Urubú it is in general use.⁴

Strangely enough, the "tamarána," the club known by Maria and others as a weapon of their ancestors, completely differed in type from the two-edged sword-club described under this appellation by Ribeiro. My informants unanimously assured me that it consisted of a cylindrical shaft about 50 cm in length and 3-4 cm in thickness, with a perforation at the grip and a loop for the wrist. The spherical butt-end, about 10 cm in diameter, was sharply set off from the shaft; this weapon was used for striking, not as a throwing club. Perhaps it corresponds to the "cajado" (stick) Ribeiro mentions as a weapon of the Vianna Gamella. Similar clubs with sharply separated head, nowhere demonstrably spherical, are known to me from the Apinayé, Ramkókamekra, southern Kayapó and many Chaco tribes; usually they serve both for striking and throwing.

⁴ Sr. Nimuendajú's data on the use of sewed feathering are significant in enlarging the very restricted distribution of sewed feathering. See Nordenskiöld, Comparative Ethnographical Studies, 3: 45, 47, map 4, Göteborg, 1924. Von den Steinen (Unter den Naturvölkern Zentral-Brasiiliens, 2nd ed., 220, Berlin, 1897) describes the sewing of the spirally placed feathers: cotton string is wrapped round the ends and itself protected by a wrapping of Philodendron bark.

Maria Cafuza described the jacamim (trumpeter-bird, *Psophia* sp.) as the lightning-bird: the convulsive opening and closing of his wings produces lightning. Apart from this statement, she also narrated the following tale:

"The Indians went hunting, scattering in small groups. One group of three men got to a big brook; a tapir was standing in the water there. One of the men shot an arrow at him, but at once there was a flash of lightning and a simultaneous peal of thunder, and the marksman fell dead. Then the second shot an arrow, but he was likewise killed by the lighting that came out of the tapir. Then the third one did not dare shoot. He went back to the village and reported what had happened. Then all the people gathered and accompanied him to the site of the occurrence, where the tapir was still standing in the water. When they saw the corpses of the two men, the people lacked courage to shoot again, for they recognized that it was no ordinary tapir, but Lightning himself."

In 1913 I recorded a very similar story among the Kréyé, a Timbira tribe living between the lower Grajahú and the Mearim, i. e., in the immediate vicinity of the Gamella.

Maria's grandmother and other Indian women also used to tell long tales about sun and moon, but Maria was unable to recall them. Sun and moon figure as human beings in a long series of episodes in Timbira mythology, but not among the Guajajára.

Altogether the Gamella of Vianna seem to have had a culture similar to that of the Timbira.*

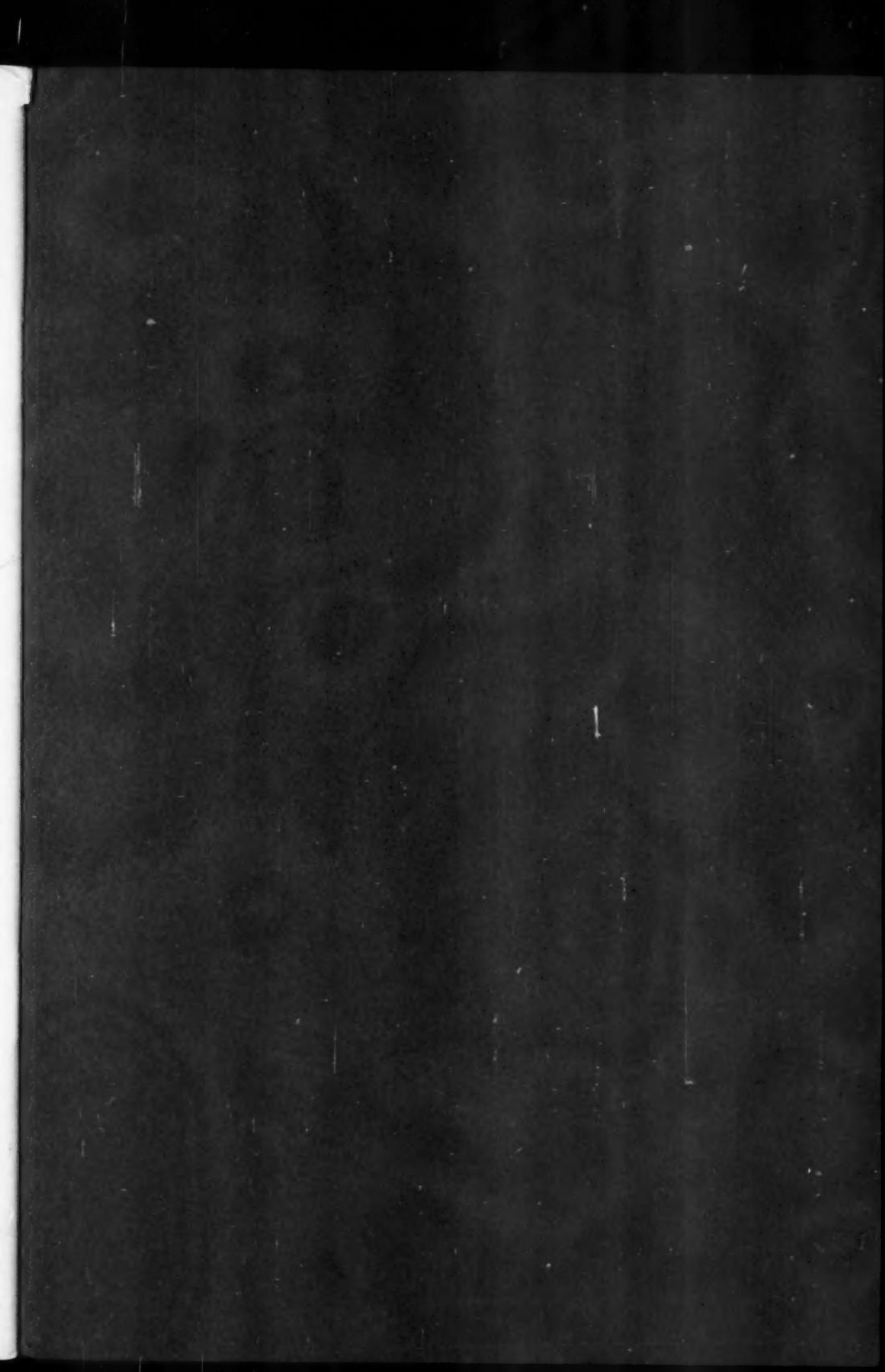
* The italicized *u* in Pukópye, Pukóboyé, *pu-če-ti* (p. 63), and the italicized *a* in Čákamekra (pp. 64, 65, 66) and Haka-po (p. 66) have a right-turned hook beneath them in Sr. Nimuendajú's manuscript,—denoting nasalization (?).—ED.

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